

# Drug improves quality of life for Dobermanns with heart disease

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Pimobendan (Vetmedin) slowed progression of the disease and prolonged good quality, symptom-free life for an average additional nine months.

Veterinary scientists at the University of Liverpool have found that early screening and drug treatment for Doberman dogs with a serious heart disease can extend and improve their quality of life.

The study, which took place over the course of six years with dogs in the UK, Canada and US, examined more than 70 Dobermanns with early

signs of dilated [cardiomyopathy](#) (DCM).

## Longer survival

The disease, which also affects cats and humans, causes the heart to become enlarged and death can be very sudden and unexpected if not detected in its early stages.

The cardiology team at the University's Small Animal Teaching Hospital examined whether early screening for DCM could improve the chances of longer survival with treatment of a drug called Pimobendan (Vetmedin).

They found that the drug slowed down the progression of the disease and prolonged good quality, symptom-free life by an average of an additional nine months.

Dr Jo Dukes McEwan, from the University's School of Veterinary Science, said: "As soon as a dog shows outward signs of the disease, it becomes more difficult to treat and the chance of surviving with the condition for any period of time reduces considerably.

"We cannot cure DCM and the [genetic cause](#) of the disease is poorly understood, but we do know that Pimobendan is a drug frequently used in cardiology for the treatment of [congestive heart failure](#) and has already proven beneficial in treating both clinical DCM and [mitral valve disease](#) in dogs.

## Screening service

"We have shown that screening dogs for DCM, and early treatment, can extend the life expectancy of Dobermanns with the condition and greatly

enhance their quality of life. The team at the Small Animal [Teaching Hospital](#) will continue to offer the screening service to owners of Dobermanns who may wish to get them checked for signs of DCM."

The research is published in the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*.

**More information:** [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1111/\(ISSN\)1939-1676](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1111/(ISSN)1939-1676)

Provided by University of Liverpool

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